

SCOPING STATEMENT

PACIFIC RIM SHALLOW GAS PROJECT Bureau of Land Management Rock Springs Field Office

Description of Project

Warren E & P, Inc. (Warren) has notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rock Springs Field Office that Warren proposes to explore and potentially develop a shallow gas project located within the administrative boundary of the BLM Rock Springs Field Office. The proposed Pacific Rim Shallow Gas Project (Pacific Rim Project) area is generally located in Townships 13, 14 and 15 North, and Ranges 100 through 101 West, 6th Principal Meridian, Sweetwater County, Wyoming (see attached map).

The total project area encompasses 47,597.82 acres of land, more or less, of which approximately: (1) 41,738.60 acres are federal surface and minerals; (2) 1,319.38 acres are State of Wyoming surface and minerals; (3) 640 acres are State of Wyoming surface and federal minerals; (4) 640 acres are private surface and federal minerals; and (5) 3259.84 acres are private surface and minerals. Existing access to the area consists of Wyoming Highway 430, Sweetwater County Road No. 24, and other existing or newly constructed roads.

The Pacific Rim Project overlies an area mostly unexplored for natural gas. Since 1954, one (1) producing well has been drilled and developed, five (5) natural gas wells have been drilled and shut-in, and ten (10) non-producing wells have been drilled, plugged, and abandoned.

Warren proposes drilling a maximum of 120 wells. Drilling is expected to last for approximately two to four years, with a projected life-of-project (LOP) of 15 to 20 years.

Proposed Drilling Operations

Because this is a shallow natural gas project, approximately 5 to 7 days would be required to drill, log, and run casing for each well. Approximately three additional days would be required to run a bond log, perforate the well casing, and run an electric pump. The estimated size of each drill site location will be approximately 180 feet by 270 feet (or 1.13 acres), and only those areas necessary to conduct drilling and completion operations would be cleared of vegetation. It is possible that some site disturbance may be required to place the drill rig on level ground. A reserve pit would be constructed on each drill site location to hold drilling fluids and cuttings. The reserve pit would be lined to prevent leakage and would be approximately 55 feet wide, 75 feet long, and 10 feet deep. Drilling depths within the project area would vary from approximately 1,500 feet to 5,500 feet. Water for drilling purposes would be obtained from natural gas wells previously drilled and located within the area, and possibly from Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Each well would be designed with a 2" water discharge line and a 4" gas line extending from the individual well site to a 6" trunk line. Disposal of production water, if any, would be through injection wells. No surface disposal or discharge of production water is proposed. A separator may

need to be placed at some or all well locations along with metering equipment.

Following drilling, completion, and testing, flowlines and gathering facilities would be installed on commercial wells. Equipment would be powered by natural-gas-fired generators until powerlines could be constructed. Gas lines would be tied into compressor stations. The volume of produced gas would dictate the need for compression. The number of compressors and the location of the compressors have not been identified at this time.

Currently, several existing roads access the proposed project area. These roads are both developed and undeveloped. The gas produced within the Pacific Rim Project area would be transported by both new and existing pipelines and gathering lines.

If the wells are non-productive or non-economical, they would be appropriately plugged; and all disturbed areas would be recontoured, reseeded, and otherwise reclaimed in compliance with applicable federal, state, or private landowner specifications.

Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents

Resource Management Plan. The document which directs management of federal lands within the Rock Springs Field Office is the approved Decision Record of 1997, Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP). The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the GRRMP, is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. In addition, the GRRMP states that public lands within the project area are open to mineral leasing and development in order to promote mineral recovery on behalf of the United States, along with appropriate mitigation of disturbance on a case-by-case basis.

The development of natural gas within the Pacific Rim Project area is in conformance with the GRRMP. The environmental analysis that will be prepared for the proposed Pacific Rim Project will incorporate decisions, terms, and conditions of use as described in the GRRMP.

Use Authorizations. Use authorizations (e.g., rights-of-way, permits, etc.) for roads, powerlines, pipelines, and well site facilities would be processed through the BLM Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) and Sundry Notices as long as the appropriate facilities remain on the applicable federal lease and are owned and operated by the unit operator. Any facility located outside a federal lease would require individual rights-of-way permits.

Lease Stipulations. Some federal oil and gas leases within the proposed area may include special stipulations concerning occupancy. These stipulations are in addition to the standard lease terms and are designed to protect surface resources (such as soils, water, and wildlife) by restricting periods of activity and areas of disturbance. Application of these lease stipulations will be handled on a case-by-case basis for each APD submitted to the BLM.

National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed project will be analyzed in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). To comply with NEPA and applicable Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (which implement NEPA), the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. The environmental document will serve several purposes. It will: **(A)** provide the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives; **(B)** identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and **(C)** provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project.

One element of the NEPA process is “scoping.” Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

1. identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis;
2. identify issues of environmental concern related to the proposed project; and
3. determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document.

This Scoping Statement has been prepared to enable governmental agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

Identified Resource Management Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities

As of this date, the following issues and concerns have been identified by an interdisciplinary team of BLM specialists. The issues identified below are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather a starting point for public input:

- Potential increased traffic and associated impacts on existing county, state, and BLM roads.
- Potential socio-economic impacts to local communities.
- Potential impacts to surface and groundwater resources, including sedimentation/salinity to the Colorado River system.
- Potential impacts to sensitive soils within the project area.
- Potential impacts from emissions resulting from additional drilling and production activities.
- Potential impacts related to reclamation of disturbed areas and control of noxious weed invasions.
- Potential conflicts with livestock management operations in the analysis area, including possible impacts to range improvement projects.
- Potential impacts to cultural and historical values within the analysis area.
- Potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the analysis area, including big game, greater sage grouse, and raptors.
- Potential impacts to the Salt Wells Wild Horse Herd Management Area and wild horses.

- Potential impacts to threatened, endangered, or candidate plant and animal species, including potential Colorado River depletion and effects on downstream listed fish species.
- Potential cumulative effects of drilling and development activities when combined with other ongoing and proposed developments on lands adjacent to the Copper Ridge project area.
- Potential conflicts between mineral development activities and recreational opportunities.

Interdisciplinary Team

Based on current understanding of issues, concerns, and opportunities, and established objectives from other plans, an interdisciplinary team made up of the following specialists has been tentatively identified:

Air Quality Specialist
 Soil Scientist
 Range Management Specialist
 Archeologist
 Geologist
 Realty Specialist
 Recreation Planner
 Wild Horse Specialist
 Hydrologist
 Petroleum Engineer
 Wildlife Biologist
 Environmental Scientist (surface protection)
 Interdisciplinary Team Leader
 Public Affairs Specialist

Timing Needs or Requirements

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help identify the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed actions, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Comments are due by **November 17, 2003**. Please submit your comments to:

Address: Darlene Horsey, Project Lead
 BLM - Rock Springs Field Office
 280 Highway 191 North
 Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Email: rock_springs_wymail@blm.gov (Please add "Pacific Rim Project" in the Subject line)

Initial Mailing List

The Scoping Notice initial mailing distribution includes the following agencies, individuals, industries, organizations and media:

Government Offices

Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming State Office (910, 912, 920, 930)
Bureau of Land Management, Rock Springs Field Office
Office of the Governor
U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wyoming State Clearinghouse
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Cheyenne, Green River)

Elected and Other Officials

Mayors of Rock Springs, Green River and Superior, Wyoming
Postmaster of Farson, Wyoming
State Senators: Rae Lynn Job, Tex Boggs
State Representatives: Marty Martin and Fred Parady
Sweetwater County Commissioners
Sweetwater County Planner
Sweetwater County Libraries (Green River and Rock Springs, Wyoming)
U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Cubin (Bonnie Cannon, Representative)
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (Lyn Shanaghy, Representative)
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas (Pati Smith, Representative)

Public Land Users and User Groups

Rock Springs Grazing Association
People for the West
Petroleum Association of Wyoming
Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States
Native American Tribes: Eastern Shoshone, Northern Ute, Northern Arapaho and Shoshone-Bannock
Sierra Club (Northern Plains Representative)
Southwest Wyoming Industrial Association
Wilderness Society
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
Wyoming Wildlife Federation
Wyoming Association of Professional Archaeologists
Wyoming Outdoor Council
Wyoming Public Lands Council

Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club
Environmental Defense Fund
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance

Newspapers

Pinedale Roundup
Sublette Examiner
Kemmerer Gazette
Rock Springs Daily Rocket-Miner
Casper Star-Tribune
Green River Star
Wyoming State Journal
Uinta County Herald

Radio Stations

KQSW/KRKK - Rock Springs
KMKX - Rock Springs
KUGR - Green River
KYCS - Rock Springs
KMER – Kemmerer
KRAL - Rawlins
KUWR - University of Wyoming

Television Stations

KTWO-TV - Casper
KCWY-TV - Casper
KFNB-TV - Casper
KGWC-TV - Casper